"A"-1h-11

The belief of the Magyars in man's survival beyond the grave originates in pre-Christian times; it is deep-rooted and generally 775 763

accepted. Death, therefore, is not necessarily a cause for sorrow. In his last minutes, the dying person, stretched out on the floor of the main living room, calmly takes leave from his family and friends who, in turn, entrust him with messages to be delivered to those he is about to join. The preparation of the corpse is the duty of 764 [462]

women, who outfit the dead in his wedding attire or best outfit (in some regions, Harta e.g., in white). In the coffin (mostly black but also blue, red, or green) they place food, tobacco, favorite tools, or toys, if the dead person was a child. The grave itself always faces east. The burial ceremony is followed by the tor which is today a simple banquet, but which used to be until quite recently an occasion of joyful celebration. This feast, as with all of the Ob- [769]

Ugric peoples, actually served the purpose of entertaining and propitiating the spirit of death.

Customs connected with marriage show surprising parallelisms 766

with burial customs. Deceased spinsters are often buried in a wedding outfit and, in some regions, a young man who died before having a chance to get married will be given a symbolic bride who, clad in wedding attire, accompanies him to the grave and is supposed to mourn him as

766 a real wife would. Moreover, the mock bride as well as her family consider themselves relatives of the deceased.

796 The Hungarian popular calendar follows closely, in its present form, the Christian calendar, although in many holidays which have a perfectly liturgical appearance pagan customs survive. The heavy pre-Christian influence is indicated by the fact that the most colorful and strange customs are connected with the movable feasts which roughly coincide with the quarters of the year which, in pagan times, were celebrated.

There are also days in the popular calendar which have become generalized among the peoples as "learned superstitions," i.e., as a result of the "didactical" verses taken from Medieval calendars which associated certain phases connected with agriculture with the feasts of the saints in the liturgical year.

The ieles napok 'important days' from the point of view of the peasant may be grouped as follows: (a) days on which work is forbidden for men or women or both, (b) days on which women cannot light a fire, (c) days which forecast the weather for the next forty days or four moons, (e) days especially favorable or especially unfavorable for